Define "institutional Christianity" within the format of listing its constituent elements. (Do not discuss whether or not it is a Biblical concept.)

Institutional Christianity can be defined as Christianity expressed and organized through formal, durable structures, offices, and procedures, rather than merely through informal gatherings or individual belief.[1] [2]

Core structural elements

- Formal organization: Recognizable bodies (local churches, denominations, dioceses, synods, mission boards, etc.) with defined membership, rules, and continuity over time.[2] [3]
- Leadership offices: Established roles such as pastors, priests, elders, bishops, deacons, and other officers, along with processes for their selection, ordination, and oversight.[4] [2]
- Governance and administration: Written constitutions, bylaws, policies, and decision-making procedures (councils, sessions, presbyteries, boards) that regulate doctrine, discipline, property, and finance.[5] [2]

Doctrinal and liturgical elements

- Confessional or doctrinal standards: Official statements of belief (creeds, confessions, catechisms, doctrinal bases) that define orthodox teaching for that body.[6] [2]
- Established worship patterns: Regular, scheduled services with structured liturgies or orders of worship (prayers, readings, sermons, music) conducted in designated spaces.[3] [1]
- Sacraments/ordinances: Recognized rites such as baptism and the Lord's Supper (Eucharist/Communion), administered under the authority of the institution and typically governed by clear rules.[2] [4]

Social and cultural elements

- Institutional identity and tradition: A shared historical narrative, symbols, customs, and practices that mark the group as a distinct, enduring Christian body (e.g., denominational families, church calendars, vestments).[7] [3]
- Educational and formative structures: Seminaries, schools, catechism classes, youth programs, and other teaching ministries organized under institutional oversight.[1] [6]
- Public and legal presence: Recognized legal status (corporations, charities), ownership of property, and engagement with civil society, politics, and culture as an identifiable Christian institution.[8] [3]

Functional and missional elements

- Corporate mission and programs: Organized evangelism, missions, charity/relief work, and social ministries coordinated and sustained by the institution rather than only by ad hoc individual efforts.[4] [2]
- Resource management: Systems for collecting and managing funds (tithes, offerings), maintaining buildings, and supporting clergy and staff.[1] [4]
- Mechanisms of discipline and accountability: Formal processes for addressing doctrinal deviation, moral failure, and internal disputes, exercised through the institution's recognized authority structures.[9] [2]

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1. https://www.gotquestions.org/institutional-church.html
2. https://biblehub.com/q/what_defines_an_institutional_church.htm
3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organized_religion
4. https://chalcedon.edu/resources/articles/the-necessity-of-the-institutional-church
5. https://www.wisdomlib.org/christianity/concept/human-institution
6. https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/church-history/article/benjamin-franklin-and-the-reasonableness-of-christianity/351B254B47125B1C661B6C5FE05C93CA
7. https://lausanne.org/occasional-paper/religious-non-religious-spirituality-western-world-lop-45
8. https://www.fabriziomusacchio.com/weekend_stories/told/2025/2025-02-20-is_christianity_a_true_religion/
9. https://www.weswhite.net/2014/04/whats-right-with-institutional-church/
10. https://syndicate.network/symposia/theology/becoming-a-christian-in-christendom/
11. https://crucibleofthought.com/organic-church-the-death-of-churchianity/
12. https://www.facebook.com/groups/auhcc/posts/24855708214050834/
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15. https://philarchive.org/archive/SLARTT-3
16. http://godswordtowomen.blogspot.com/2012/06/institutional-vs-non-institutional.html
17. https://www.frankviola.org/2010/09/07/missional-organic-church-an-interview-with-neil-cole-frank-viola/
18. https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/ingredients-institutional-trust/